CAMP WHITE GRENADE II

"Preserving the Past for the Future"

MEDFORD AS IT ONCE WAS March 2006 Edition

Simply impossible over 60 years have passed since my husband received the "invitation" to join the service or else. The first week in January 1943 he left for Camp White, in Medford Oregon. Being a welder meant nothing; (potato peeler) seemed to be his calling for the time being. I waited two weeks and took the train out west.

The trip took four nights and three days, Milwaukee-Seattle-Medford. In North Dakota the train inched along. It was pitch dark and a blizzard. A crew of six tired men was shoveling the tracks so we could also inch along.

Lucky for me at Avery, Idaho an army wife boarded the train and sat next to me. She was well informed about Camp life and was a big help to me. We changed trains in Seattle and were well on our way through truly majestic beauty. While passing thru Grants Pass and Klamath Falls I gave thanks that it was a bright early morn and we could enjoy the view.

The conductor ambled thru our car calling "next stop Medford". My heart was pounding and my brain said "what now"? Welcome to Medford! Traveler's aid gave my room away because I was late, so much for the snowstorm. I decided to walk up every street until I found a place. A sweet little lady was putting a for rent sign in her window. I spent much of the day discovering my new town, which would be my home for the coming year.

There was a wonderful welcoming atmosphere, truly a pretty town. My new address was Oakdale Avenue. At a little park nearby Mexican grove workers would bring their guitars and sing on Saturday night until the powers that be said nada. The house on the corner had roses in bloom in January, unbelievable to me. Walking down the main street was the aptly named Medford Hotel; the Salvation Army was not far away and provided a relief from the cares of Army life. They brought a jukebox and ping-pong tables, ect. Weekends were busy.

For being a small town they had a lot of cafes and such. The Cozy Café offered good, cheap food. On weekends we lined up around the block at the Pit BBQ, we still dream of that. Two ladies open a donut shop; donuts were 10 cents each or three for a quarter, such a deal. Just before getting on the bus to go to the Camp, I would stop at the Maid Rite sandwich shop. A Maid Rite hamburger was much like Coney dog, loaded with everything, it could hold ones hunger all day. Medford had one theater in midtown. The Ashville Hotel was close to downtown with the Montgomery Ward store across the street. A Woman's Dress shop added to the business section, the sign in the window

announced buy one dress at full price, get the next for a dollar. Young and foolish I took advantage of that and was totally broke the first week.

With my landladies permission I redecorated a bit with fabric purchased at the JC Penny store for 12 cents a yard. The local fruit market donated two wooden apple crates, which soon became nightstands with a candy stripe fabric skirt. Nice and homey depending on where you come from. A neighborhood grocer sold various salads, which he served by the handful, his handful, I guess he never heard of Louis Pasteur.

Having a joy for trains, it was fun for me just seeing the Medford station. Probably busier then ever with all the GI's arriving daily. A big grocerteria was an interesting concept, as I had never heard of them. It had a horseshoe counter and sitting on a stool, chatting with the locals made life more interesting. The roller rink was busy with music and made a great diversion. A river ran thru town and the bridge was picturesque. There was a nice bowling alley, that was larger then I expected, but you couldn't beat it for fun. There really wasn't much industry other the Coca Cola bottling plant and the ever popular Harry and David, which is still famous and going strong. I sometimes wonder if the Peat Torch is still burning and guiding travelers through the dark.

CAMP WHITE-1943

After being advised I could get a job at the Camp, I boarded the bus and entered the office of the Provost Marshall reporting to Ms. Coleman. My timing was right; Mark Dempster need help at PX 16, which become my home sweet home for one year. Being fingerprinted gave me a sense of belonging. The 91st Div. took over the entire east side. My husband, Jack Gleixner, was still in boot camp and his outfit3507th Ord. MAM Co. was on the west side with the 510 Engineers among others. The PX 16 was across the road. The 17th bldg. was used for vehicle storage and welding, it was totally destroyed by fire at the hands of an angry GI. It didn't take long for me to discover the Hospital. My husband, at the age of 22, got the measles and was isolated. The hospital is good sized and neat as a pin. Sick or not, you mopped under your bed and washed the window nearest to you. Upon returning to his barracks, my husband was assigned to the office and made company clerk. He worked mostly with Sgt. Dickie. George Dickie was all business. One day he took his men to the PX and ordered them to "buy what you need and line up when I tell you to". When they didn't move fast enough he would read them off good. He scared me to death; I had to turn around so he wouldn't see me cry. He dismissed the men, kids really, and then came back to me saying, "They have to obey orders pronto or sometime they might be dead". Yes sir, you didn't argue with Sgt. Dickie.

The PX had a bar that offered beer and soft drinks. Liquor was rationed in town and a card was needed to buy it. The jukebox was next to my cigarette and candy counter, it played until nine PM. My new friend, Arlene Rollo, worked next to me selling stationary, we remained life long friends. We also had a small soda fountain that sold burgers. Every now and then the doors would burst open and a trillion guys would rush in. One could always tell when the cooks made liver and onions.

Capt. Foreman left the Company and Capt. Patterson replaced him. Boot camp was over and we went home on leave. I had to relinquish our room in town but was lucky

enough to get another one on our return. I had cooking privileges but decided to pass on it once the landlady told me she had killed a rattlesnake that was coiled up in kettle in the bottom cupboard.

Ginger Rogers owned the dairy farm that provided milk for most of Camp White. Her mother was a fiery little woman; she would pull into the local gas station demanding attention now. Clark Gable sometimes fished in the Rogue River. He might have felt macho there, but some of our engineers found it correctly named. It could be stressful at times.

The company threw a picnic at Ashland's Twin Plunges; I think it is a state park. The cooks provided sandwiches. Swimming was great and a one time deal. The ride back was memorable with Mount Hood in the foreground. Next time out was Christmas dinner in the mess hall. The food smelled terrific and we could hardly wait. The Chaplin took his time, going on and on, suddenly a guy called "Sorry to interrupt but the Christmas tree is on fire" Thank God for small favors! Many songs have been written, long songs, short songs, happy songs, and sad songs. The saddest to me is 'Should Auld Acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind', gets me every time.

My husbands outfit went to England in January 1944 and entered France at Utah beach.

I left for my home in Milwaukee with Kraemer's wife, Eleanor, driving Cpl. Carroll's convertible to Chicago. End of Chapter. Thanks for the memories.

Lorraine Gleixner

*A few mistakes by Loraine, in 1943 Medford had four theaters. The Craterian, the Rialto, Roxy, and, the Holly. The mountain she referenced is Mount Pitt, not Mount Hood.

COMMANDERS CORNER: There were many Army organizations that trained at Camp White, Oregon between 1942-1944. By this time they were all in alignment to make their attacks on Normandy, France and several Islands in the Pacific. All these organizations have great war stories to tell. If you send your short stories we will try to get them in our newsletter.

Happy 2006! To all our Italian friends in Italy, thanks for the Christmas cards.

Commander
Al Inlow

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We need a
91st Division
316th Engineer Bn Unit Crest
for our Display board in the museum.
If you have one or know of some one who has one please contact us at 541-826-2111 ex 3674 or
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"Remember that warm, soft mud last summer?"

CWHA
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